

WE'RE NOT BLIND, WE BROKE THE MAGIC, ADMIT BEE GEES

TALKING FRANKLY TO ALAN SMITH



BEE GEES BARRY, ROBIN and MAURICE — their squabbles took all three to the brink of breakdowns.

Blues. They did a hell of a lot of stuff like our's, like when their first LP came out with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, or the Victoria Philharmonic or whatever it was."

And the Bee Gees future? Maurice: "I think we now accept that if you play it right, it's possible to do things as individuals while still working within the framework of the group."

Robin: "Put it this way: the Bee Gees will never be moved. The Bee Gees are there, and they will never, ever, part again. If a solo record comes out, it will be with each of our enthusiasm and great support. We are a musical establishment."

Touring

Barry: "We don't intend to remain as just a recording group. We'll be touring. We'll be doing America and Japan this month, and the European one's being set up at the moment."

"The English tour will be after we've had at least a couple of records in the charts. It's worth waiting."

Maurice: "The thing is that now, we're a little older, a little suer, and a little bit more wary of the business side of it. We want to know exactly what's going on. We don't want to lash out on a 55-piece orchestra and know that nothing is going to come out of it. And anyway, you can make just as beautiful music with a 16-piece orchestra. Or even two acoustics and Robin singing."

Robin: "We've realised now that people are not fools, and that even a 12-year-old kid can now technically pick out what's on and what's not on a record. They're far more sophisticated."

Maurice: "We were the first group to come along, man, with a beautiful orchestra and a string section. And we went on stage with them, and an RAF Band and a 60-piece choir. So we've done that, so we won't do that again. We must try something else."

Squabbles

I asked them if, all else aside, they didn't think that by their squabbles they'd destroyed the magic of the Bee Gees?

Didn't they feel that the rows, the accusations, had left a taste with the public it would be hard to overcome?

Didn't they feel it would be a tough row, no matter how worthy the new Bee Gees' single "Lonely Days"?

Didn't they feel they'd broken the magic?

Said Robin: "I don't think we broke the magic. The music remained."

And Maurice: "Our songs were about love and all things nice... and when we quarrelled I think yes, we did break the magic. But we have to build that bond again."

WHO'S WHERE

Week beginning Friday, Jan. 1

ELTON JOHN: Birmingham Mothers

(2); Hemel Hempstead Pavilion

(3);

SKID ROW: Northampton Blisworth

Hotel (3); Wood Green Fish-

mongers Arms (5); Tooting Castle

(6);

IF: London Lyceum (3);

FAMILY/FAIRFIELD PARLOUR: Sut-

ton Coldfield Stepmothers Club

(3);

T. REX: Redcar Coatham (3);

MCUNNESS FLINT: Birmingham

Stone Manor (5);

PENTANGLE: Royal Albert Hall (6);

BLACK SABBATH: Hull City Hall

(7);

DA DA: Hampstead Country Club

(1);

WILD WALLY: Harrow R.F.C. (2);

Queen's Hall, Barnstaple (8);

BANDWAGON: Birmingham Cedar

(2); Maidstone Tudor House (3);

Watford Top Rank (4); Purley

Orchid (7);

HIGH TIDE: Newark Tech. (6);

Clouds Derby (7);

GROUNDHOGS: Windsor 1832 Club

(5);

GASWORKS/PICES: East Ham Town

Hall (4);

T.2: Bellington Hulme Ballroom (1);

QUINTESSENCE: Newcastle Mayfair

(1);

CABARET

For one week from Sunday, Jan. 3

SEARCHERS: Manchester Broadway.

For two weeks from Monday, Jan. 4

FRANKIE VAUGHAN: Manchester

Golden Garter.

For one week beginning Monday,

Jan. 4

BACHELORS: Sheffield Fiesta.

ASSESSING the Gibb brothers, fairly, is a less than easy task. Were they once, as an American magazine put it — "a trio of naive and uneducated teenagers"? Or do we point to the sheer ingenuity of many of their melodies, the oddly-melancholic brilliance of their rhythms... and the implied respect for them of artists who recorded their songs like Feliciano, Richie Havens, Janis Joplin, Sinatra, Tim Rose, Nina Simone, Presley and others?

The reunified Bee Gees were ready to admit to a little bit of both when I met them in the London offices of their manager Robert Stigwood recently.

"We know," said Robin Gibb, sitting in a semi-circle with Barry and Maurice, "what happened to the Bee Gees. We're not blind to it."

Said Barry: "To be very truthful with you, the three of us never really understood what the whole

row between us was about anyway. It was a very legal situation, for one thing.

"But I'll tell you this. All three of us came very close to breakdowns. It was a nightmare."

Said Maurice, not perhaps realising that Press bulletins to keep us informed of every stage of their bust-up were once regularly issued by the Bee Gees' own Press office: "The worst thing of all was that the Press deliberately kept pushing the whole thing."

"We'd forgotten our troubles, or were trying to, but we weren't left in peace. We just wanted to get on and do our solo bits and see what happened."

Barry: "The reason we broke up was musical frustration. We'd been together for 11 years, man. Everybody was trying to do something different. We had to split sometime."

"We were even starting to become funny about who was singing lead on different records... the whole thing."

Robin: "It wasn't musical incompatibility. It was just a matter of politics within ourselves. It might be that one of us was planning to have a recording session tonight somewhere, and the rest of us hadn't heard about it. It was lack of communication. I might think... or Barry or Maurice

might think... 'somebody is keeping me out of something.'

"You start to ask yourself 'why aren't I there,' and you say well, it won't happen again. Then it does happen again, and suddenly everyone is getting different messages, and you've got trouble."

Barry: "Everybody got a neurosis about it."

Maurice: "We'd toured for two years without a break. We were with each other every day and every night. You couldn't say goodbye and go home to the wife... it was like two years solid. That's why we stopped touring."

Mature

"Now, we're more mature. Now, we're honest with each other. But before, there were things we wouldn't bring out and say to each other."

"How long were we apart? About a year and a half. But we've been working now for about three months, and in that time we've got together an LP and a single and the music for a film and even some solo stuff."

Robin: "We've got triple the enthusiasm in our work."

Barry: "And we're happier than we were last time."

Talking rapidly, excitedly and together about their new plans and their new music, the group good-humouredly admit to still having suspicions of each other.

According to Maurice: "It's funny that in the first week of recording, we sat around and looked at each other and smiled, but we were all afraid to suggest something. It was a case of 'who's gonna try and take control?'"

No respect

Barry: "We were all willing to give ground, though, and it was like: 'whoever pushes the first idea, we'll accept it.' And we started to ask each other's opinion, and generally think about the other person a bit more. In the past, we were just three kids. We couldn't respect each other as men and for each other's talent."

Maurice: "I don't know if our music has changed, progressed. You might think that, somebody else might think that. But from our own point of view it's just that we're recording the same, writing the same."

Robin: "Our music is a folk formula. We play and write the music we feel, and the music we feel people want."

Barry: "Our music isn't underground music. What we've done on the new album is all based on melody."

Meet the Band No 3

us breaking up the way so many groups seem to these days. That kind of thing only happens when people get stale — but with us, it's a case of heads together. We're mentality in tune. That's what the Roy Young thing is all about.

"Influences? Well, I've always been influenced by Ray Charles, and a lot of Blood Sweat and Tears and Chicago. But that's not the point. We're all so different in this band we just simply aren't into one thing. We fuse jazz, rock, everything."

I said I remembered him in the past, standing at the piano raving up a storm, and I wondered when he'd decided to change direction.

He's an obviously sincere, talented and respected musician — recently he recorded with Ringo Starr, Clapton and Voorman — and I wondered when he'd found his new self.

"It was in the Bahamas. I went there with the Rebel Rousers and I was fat and stale, and as far as the music was concerned I felt like I was in a 9 to 5 job with no future. I had no interest."

"We were doing a season there, and after a couple of months it became like a sunshine paradise prison... nothing to do, nowhere to go, except lie on the beach and think."

"And I thought... and suddenly I thought when I go back to England I'm not going back to the old routine. For a start I'd been playing second fiddle to Bennett, and it was just musically frustrating, a dead end."

"I came back three stone lighter... full of ideas, full of excitement... and I told the man who now manages us, Laurie O'Leary. He'd had faith in me from the start, and he had faith then, and he helped me see it through."

By Alan Smith

who writes some good commercial material for the band and who needs no introduction to students of the Liverpool scene.

Together with John Lee (trombone); Dave Wendells (guitar); Paul Simmons (bass guitar); and Alan Townsend (trumpet), they form a satisfying line-up for Young, who now intends to tour more outside of London after a long phase establishing the band on the capital's club scene.

He told me: "I just couldn't see



ROY YOUNG BAND: (l to r) ALAN TOWNSEND, ROY YOUNG, JOHN LEE, DAVE WENDELLS, CLIFF DAVIES, PAUL SIMMONDS and HOWIE CASEY.

ROY YOUNG

ROY Young, whose Roy Young Band is currently pumping out a solid single, "Grannie's Got A Painted Leg" and who shortly releases a first album, is a man of many parts.

Ex-Hamburg booker for the Beatles, ex-rockin' star of BBC-TV's "Drumbeat" show, ex-Cliff Bennett and a lot else besides, he is today a respected musician whom many in the music business regard as on the doorstep of long-awaited fame.

He says he's glad things didn't happen really big for him in those days because, like Marty Wilde, it might have stood in his way today. And he doesn't want that, because he loves his music and he knows he's got a great band behind him who deserve to be heard.

Basically the Roy Young Band is the sound of some fantastic 1970 rock dressed with brass and the jazz influence of Cliff Davies.

They've also got Howie Casey,